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FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
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SIPDIS

DOL/ILAB FOR TINA MCCARTER AND STATE FOR DRL/ILCSR FOR TU
DANG

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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EIND](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIA: CHILD LABOR INFORMATION FOR THE TRADE AND
DEVELOPMENT ACT (GSP) 2008 REPORT

REF: 08 STATE 127448

¶1. There have been no legislative or regulatory updates since March 2008 on laws related to child labor. There is no tradition in Bosnia and Herzegovina of forced labor in the production of goods. Known incidents of child labor take place in small, family-owned shops (services) and farms (agriculture).

¶2. Some children, especially ethnic Roma, are forced to participate in begging rings in what is becoming an increasingly organized structure. Unfortunately, there are few resources devoted specifically to child labor protections, investigations and prosecutions by the state-level Bosnian Government, or in either of the two entities, the Federation or the Republika Srpska (RS). In addition, despite growing awareness in the NGO community that these begging rings are organized, much of Bosnia's government still dismisses begging as something done for poverty relief. The Bosnian Government does not collect data on child labor, although several NGOs, including UNICEF and IOM, track data on child labor largely as it relates to trafficking (Note: According to NGO estimates there are approximately 76,000 ethnic Roma living in BiH. End note.).

¶3. Both the Federation and Sarajevo Canton prosecutors offices report that they have conducted sporadic activities in an attempt to reduce the number of children begging on the streets, although no organizers of such rings have been prosecuted. A further testament to the organization of the begging rings is the fact that very few children actually beg in their hometown, many involved in organized begging rings of long distances from their families.

¶4. The Council of Ministers of BiH officially adopted the Action Plan for the Roma Decade in 2008 and allocated three million KM (1.43 KM = \$1) for Roma development activities related to the plan. The Roma Decade is an initiative of European Governments to accelerate the process of improving the welfare of Roma communities in the areas of education, employment, health and housing. Although three million KM was allocated for 2009, NGOs with whom we spoke were skeptical that the money would actually be spent. If the BiH Government is successful in spending these funds, any projects could tangentially benefit a reduction in Roma poverty and therefore a reduction in force child begging. Based on approval of the Roma Decade strategy, we expect an increasing awareness in the coming years of child begging and its role in the broader organized crime structure.
ENGLISH